

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method of treating viral encephalitis in a
2 patient, comprising administering to the patient an effect
3 amount of an agent that inhibits binding of leukocytes to
4 brain endothelial cells via leukocyte surface antigen alpha-4
5 integrin.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the agent is
2 administered to the patient after viral infection.

1 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the patient is
2 asymptomatic.

1 4. The method of claim 2, wherein the patient shows
2 symptoms of encephalitis.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the agent is
2 administered prophylactically to a patient at risk of
3 infection by a virus causing encephalitis.

1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the virus is a
2 herpes virus or an arbovirus.

1 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising
2 monitoring the patient for symptoms of encephalitis.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the agent
2 specifically binds to the alpha-4 as a subunit of VLA-4.

1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the agent is an
2 antibody.

1 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the antibody is
2 a Fab fragment.

1 11. The method of claim 8, wherein the agent binds
2 to an epitope of the alpha-4 subunit formed by association
3 with a beta-1 subunit in an alpha-4 beta-1 complex and lacking
4 in an alpha-4 beta-7 complex.

1 12. The method of claim 9, wherein the antibody is
2 a humanized antibody.

1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the humanized
2 antibody is a humanized form of the mouse 21.6 antibody
3 characterized by a light chain variable domain designated SEQ.
4 ID. No. 1 and a heavy chain variable domain designated SEQ.
5 ID. No. 2.

1 14. The method of claim 1, further comprising
2 administering an antiviral agent to the patient.

1 15. The method of claim 1, further comprising
2 administering an antiinflammatory agent to the patient.

1 16. The method of claim 1, wherein the agent is
2 formulated with a carrier as a pharmaceutical composition.

1 17. The method of claim 1, wherein the patient is a
2 pediatric patient.